



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### For Immediate Release

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### **DEQ-CID obtains arrest warrants for four men for illegal disposal and criminal damage to property**

**BATON ROUGE** – Yesterday, investigators within the Criminal Investigation Division of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality obtained arrest warrants for four Bastrop men for the illegal disposal of a substance and simple criminal damage to property. The warrants were signed by the Hon. Stephens Winters of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court.

Marcus Lynn Rhodes, 36; Marvin Rhodes, 36; Gregory DeWayne Felts, 20; and Steven Michael Edwards, 23; all of Bastrop, allegedly illegally disposed of approximately 275 waste tires and other construction and demolition debris on private property in Morehouse Parish. Marvin Rhodes was already in Morehouse Parish jail on unrelated charges. He was subsequently booked yesterday for the charges specified in DEQ-CID's arrest warrant. Steven Edwards was arrested with the help of Morehouse Sheriff's Office and agents from Louisiana Probation and Parole. Marcus Rhodes and Gregory Felts are still at large.

The investigation determined that none of the four men are certified waste tire haulers. In addition, the evidence indicated that the men were knowingly dumping the tires and debris on private property in order to avoid legally-mandated disposal fees.

"Illegally dumped scrap tires pose a serious threat to human health and the environment. Tires stored outside retain water and pose a health threat by providing an ideal breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitoes and rodents," said Jeffrey Nolan, Manager of DEQ-CID. "The eradication of illegal dumping of waste tires and waste debris is a top priority of DEQ-CID."

If convicted of the crime of the illegal disposal of a substance and simple criminal damage to property, the men each face possible imprisonment for not more than ten years with or without hard labor, or a fine of not more than \$5 thousand, or both.

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents may contact the department at 225-219-3640 or Toll Free 1-888-763-5424.

*An arrest does not constitute guilt in a criminal case. All evidence compiled during the investigation is presented to the area prosecutors who determine if formal charges are warranted.*